



Public Affairs

## VENTURE

November 2005

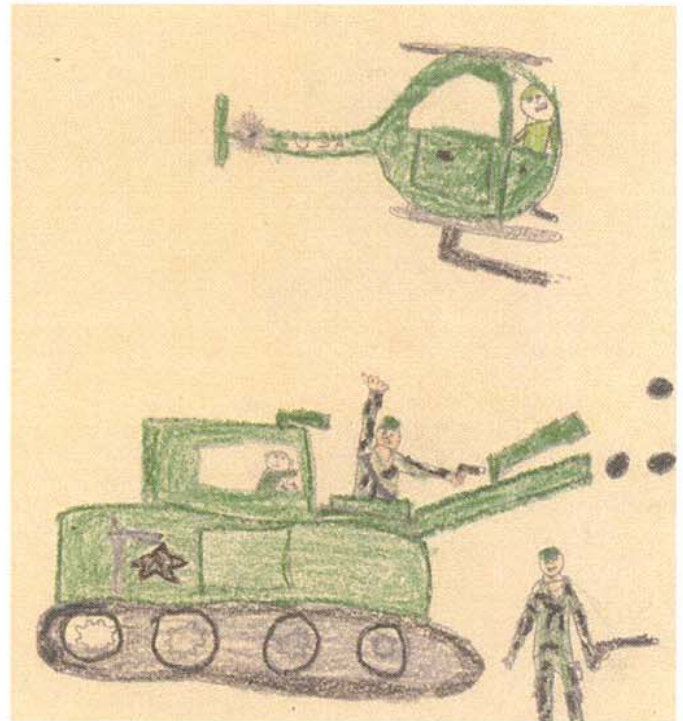


### REMEMBERING VETERANS DAY



"Dear Soldier, My name is Mariana. I go to Edwin J. Kiest Elementary School. I am in third grade. My teacher's name is Mrs. Kelly. I like to play soccer and basketball. What do you like to do? I want to thank you for fighting for our country's freedom and for being so brave."

"Dear Soldier, My name is Arturo. I am in third grade and my school's name is Edwin J. Kiest Elementary. My favorite sport is soccer. Thank you for fighting for our freedom."



"Dear Solder, My name is Johnny and I go to Edwin J. Kiest Elementary. My favorite sport is football. Thanks for being a good citizen and fighting for our freedom. Be brave all the time."

The Bonham Regional Veterans Day Program is featured on the web gallery. Take a look!!!

#### *In this issue...*

GERD and Cancer

We do make a difference

My HealthVet

Around VANTHCS





*From the Director*

We survived the whirlwind of a JCAHO survey! The complete report will probably not be available until some time in January, but one area we did very well in was cleanliness - an awesome accomplishment considering VANTHCS maintains 63.36 acres under roof.

Combined efforts of many employees went into making VANTHCS JCAHO-ready. Even if it wasn't your job to pick a piece of trash off the floor, you did it. I thank everyone who pitched in to help.

If you're looking for something good at VANTHCS, you don't have to look very far.

Betty Bolin Brown



**Venture published by  
VANTHCS**

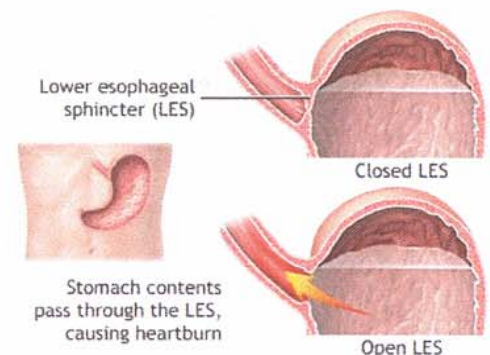
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*Photos courtesy of*  
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Martha Fellhauer-Sampson  
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## Reflux-Linked Esophagus Cancer on the Rise

Rates for adenocarcinoma of the esophagus are soaring, and experts aren't sure why

The incidence of a deadly form of esophagus cancer associated with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is rising at an alarming rate, experts say. Some 90 percent of people who develop adenocarcinoma of the esophagus will be dead within five years and, currently, there are few effective prevention, screening or treatment methods available, according to a review article published by the American Cancer Society. "Of all the melanoma and prostate cancers that are increasing, this one is the most rapidly increasing. It way outpaces melanoma and prostate cancer," said Drs. Rhonda F. Souza and Stuart J. Spechler, co-authors of the report and staff physicians at Dallas VAMC (Internal Medicine, UT Southwestern). "Even though it's increased, it's still not as prevalent as colon cancer." Unlike colon cancer, however, there are no really good screening techniques for esophageal adenocarcinomas - this despite the fact that the major risk factors are known to be GERD and Barrett's esophagus, a precancerous condition in which the esophagus changes so that some of its lining is replaced by tissue similar to that normally found in the intestine. Each year, about one half of 1 percent of people with Barrett's, or one in 200, will go on to develop adenocarcinoma of the esophagus. Obesity may also play a role in the disease, but no one is really sure. In the West, body mass index is increasing, and it's thought that by becoming obese, people are more predisposed to getting heartburn. The problem lies in identifying those people most likely to develop this type of cancer. But there may be some ways to narrow it down. People who get this cancer are those who have GERD and, in the U.S., probably 60 million people have reflux and about 20 percent of those have reflux on a weekly basis, and those are the ones who'd be most at risk to get this cancer. If you have chronic reflux, you need to pay attention, and if you have reflux with trouble swallowing, weight loss or bleeding, you should see a doctor. Those are alarm or early-warning signs. There is some evidence that aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) may help prevent esophagus cancer from developing in patients with Barrett's esophagus, although the benefits may not outweigh the risks. Those at high risk - a white male over age 50 with longstanding heartburn, for example, should see a physician and get an endoscopy even in the absence of any alarm symptoms and, hopefully, before a tumor has developed.



excerpts from *HealthDay News*  
November 16

VANTHCS congratulates on of our part time physicians, Scott Grundy, director of UT Southwestern's Center for Human Nutrition, chosen this year among six by the American Heart Association as a distinguished scientist.



Have any news or story features?  
Get your ideas to  
Penny Kerby  
in Public Affairs.



My husband has been a patient in the Dallas VA for approximately 6 months out of this year. He has numerous medical problems and has lain at deaths door on many occasions. From a veteran and patient's wife, we would like to take this opportunity to commend the Dallas VA for a job well done. The doctors, although young, are well instructed by some of the best medical attending physician in the metroplex area. These doctors strive to do the best of their ability and are doing a wonderful job. As we all know nothing is perfect and there are areas that could always be addressed, and what ever problems there may be, they are being addressed at all times. My husband is a patient for the 20<sup>th</sup> time in three years. Not all hospital stays have been in the Veterans Hospital, most were in civilian hospitals in the area. Of all the times he has been a patient in different facilities, we have to say the nursing care of the Dallas VA has been outstanding. The concern and care of the nurses throughout this facility is the best we have ever had. May I commend the leadership of this nursing staff and say "Well Done." We have also noticed the housekeeping and find it to be always ongoing. Someone is cleaning and scrubbing 24 hours a day. We, as a couple, would like to commend the doctors, nurses and housekeepers of the Dallas VA and are happy to tell people when we need medical help and assistance we have the best there is - Dallas VAMC.

Mr. & Mrs. Tommy B.

## Here are comments from our in-patient greeters



Mr. D was scheduled for surgery on Monday morning. The hospital contacted him on Friday and requested he come in Saturday morning to start an antibiotic IV before surgery. His comment was, "Everything had gone like clock-work." On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, he gave his care a 10. Mr. D said his care had been perfect and the staff does a really good job.

Mr. M said he was admitted a week ago for a scheduled visit. He had no complaints and said his care had been fine. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, he gave his care a 10.

Mr. C was admitted on 11/7/05. His only comment was that the staff had done a "FANTASTIC job."

Mr. W was admitted for day surgery. They could not get to him until 7 p.m., so he was kept overnight. He said everyone was great, simply fantastic. He said everyone treated him as if they cared rather than that it was just a job. He said he would be writing a note to let everyone know of the great care he received.



A web-based program designed by VA to help veterans manage their care. Check it out, [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**New feature - order prescription refills online.** You can now use My HealthVet to refill VA prescriptions, check the status of a refill, and view your VA prescription history online! This service is designed exclusively for VA patients to manage medications prescribed by VA doctors. To access Prescription Refill, you need to be a registered user of My HealthVet. Other features include: Food Journal allows you to record your daily food intake. Perhaps you have been told by your doctor to eat specific types of foods to help lower blood pressure, control diabetes, and/or to control weight – you can record and track what you eat here. Activity Journal helps you keep track of your daily exercise routine. Record how far you walk every day, how many sit-ups you do, and how many reps you complete on the bench press. Pulse Oximetry tracks readings of oxygen levels taken from a pulse oximeter. Monitor the usefulness of oxygen therapy by recording your pulse oximetry readings.

Veterans may access My HealthVet from any computer with internet capability and special computers are also available at locations throughout Dallas, Bonham and FWOPC. For questions or assistance, contact Consumer Health Librarian Teresa Hanson at 214 857-2169 or 1-800-849-3597, extension 72169.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Commemorating 75 years of service





# Around VANTHCS

**Mission Possible**



**Goals for VANTHCS**

**Dallas \$165,000**

**Bonham \$20,250**

**FWOPC \$10,000**

Contributions continue to come in. If you have not had a chance to participate, take a minute to review the CFC organizations that need our help. In December, CFC will raffle off 32" TVs at all three facilities. Key workers are selling tickets for \$2.00 each, and all proceeds will benefit CFC.

"Open Season" is November 14 - December 12, 2005. Employees should use Employee Express (EEX) to make any changes which will become effective on the first day of the pay period beginning January 8, 2006.



**DIVERSITY DIVERSITY DIVERSITY**

"Unique", "varied", "different", "distinct", "distinguishable" - all describe/define diversity. Diversity refers to the variety of backgrounds and characteristics that makes us similar yet unique and encompasses relationships, acceptance and respect. We no longer say diversity is a melting pot. A more accurate image is a tossed salad or stew, where various ingredients remain distinct even as they are mixed together.

Have you had a chance to look at the diversity map in the Atrium? Place a pin where your ancestors originated. It's interesting to see where we came from.



*Happy Thanksgiving*



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4500 S. Lancaster Rd.  
Dallas, TX 75216  
214 742-8387

**Fort Worth Outpatient Clinic**  
3 00 W. Rosedale  
Fort Worth, TX 76104  
817 882-6001

**Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center**  
1201 E. Ninth St.  
Bonham, TX 75418  
903 583-6210

[www.north-texas.med.va.gov](http://www.north-texas.med.va.gov)